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Inside Information

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United States Department
of Agriculture

Office of Governmental
and Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20250

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 4

JANUARY 24, 1982

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USDA NEWS ON SECOND ELECTRONIC SYSTEM

Beginning this week, all users of the Dialcom electronic mail system can get the latest USDA national news releases by simply typing the letters "USDA" at the command symbol. Last month, USDA news was made available through AGNET, a computer data system operated by University of Nebraska.

One of the first "customers" of the new electronic news service is the Minneapolis STAR-TRIBUNE's new electronic information service for farmers.

In effect, USDA news now can be flashed electronically through these two systems to farmers with home computers around Fargo, North Dakota, in minutes.

The STAR-TRIBUNE is testing its electronic information service in the Fargo area before expanding to other areas of the upper Midwest.

The STAR-TRIBUNE's farm editor also will be able to get USDA news releases via the electronic system, thereby avoiding the long wait to receive printed copies of releases via the regular postal service.

Also, the STAR-TRIBUNE service will be able to receive news reports electronically on the same Dialcom mail system from the Extension Service information offices in North Dakota (Chuck Humphrey) and Minnesota (Gail McClure).

In addition to news releases, USDA's News Center will soon make available through the system summaries of USDA outlook and situation reports and other current information.

Additional information about this new news service is available from the USDA News Center in Room 404-A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or call (202) 447-4026 or contact electronic mailbox AGR003.

AGNET USERS OF NEWS RELEASES DOUBLE

External users of AGNET's news release service doubled in one month after USDA releases were added to the system.

External users are news media, farmers, ranchers, production credit agencies, commercial businesses, etc., or anyone outside the land-grant university and Extension Service system.

(more)

Total of 470 outside calls were received by AGNET during December for news releases. This compares with 258 in November and about 100 per month earlier in the year.

All calls for news releases, including land-grant university and county Extension Service agents, totaled 2,443 in December. This was up from the 1,736 in November and about 1,000 per month earlier in 1981.

AGNET is a computer data and electronic mail system operated by the University of Nebraska in cooperation with 6 other midwestern and western land-grant universities.

USDA's News Center began adding USDA national news releases to AGNET's news service the first of December.

PHOTOGRAPHER POSITION OPEN IN TENNESSEE

The Office of Communications in the Institute of Agriculture at the University of Tennessee has an opening for an assistant communications specialist (medical photographer). Deadline for applications is February 8, or until a qualified applicant is available.

The incumbent is responsible to the Director of the Office of Communications for providing leadership in the development of medical photography.

Primary duties include providing instructional photographic slides and 16mm films in the area of veterinary medicine. Types of photography include infra-red, ultraviolet, microscopic, ophthalmic, radiographic, surgical, zoological, close-up, portraiture and news.

Production includes dark room work, film editing, audio/visual presentations and other educational materials.

Send applications to Bill J. Reed, Director of Communications, Institute of Agriculture, University of Tennessee, P.O. Box 1071, Knoxville, TN 37901-1071; or call (615) 974-7141.

MINNESOTA TV PROGRAM NEEDS AG REPORTER

The "Country Day" television show, Minneapolis, Minn., has a job available for an agricultural reporter.

They need someone with 3 to 5 years of experience in electronic or print media reporting, with heavy emphasis on national agricultural news and issues.

Anyone interested should contact Jim Davis at (612) 642-4234.

FCA NAMES NEW PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIRECTOR

Kim C. Bowersox has been named director of congressional and public affairs for the Farm Credit Administration, an independent federal agency which supervises the nationwide cooperative farm credit system.

Bowersox will develop policy and manage the activities of the recently merged public, congressional and international affairs sections of FCA. He will also serve as chief external relations advisor for the agency.

Bowersox has served as senior legislative aide to Rep. Leon Panetta of California, serving on House Agriculture Committee and subcommittee assignments.

The farm credit system supervised by FCA currently has \$78 billion in loans outstanding to farmers, ranchers, commercial fishermen and their cooperatives, and to rural homeowners and certain farm-related businesses.

Governor of FCA is Donald Wilkinson, former administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service and director of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture and former information director of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture.

INTERACTIVE VIDEO/MICROCOMPUTERS ANYONE?

Scott V. Fedale, associate agricultural editor at the University of Idaho, wants to hear from anyone doing any work in the area of interactive video/micro-computer programming.

He is particularly interested in anyone who is using the Apple II micro-computer with a videotape machine and has put together a videotape/computer program for use by Extension Service staff or for use in formal instruction.

Fedale can be reached through Radio-TV Services, Department of Agricultural Information, College of Agriculture, University of Idaho, Moscow, ID 83843, or by calling (208) 885-6436.

ELECTRONIC MAIL BUSINESS PICKING UP

Two additions to the electronic mail system, and inquiries from others, to the "agricultural" electronic mail network, illustrate increasing interest in this fast and efficient method of communicating.

Information office of USDA's Food & Nutrition Service now has a mailbox on the Dialcom mail system. It is AGR010.

This brings the number of USDA agency information mailboxes to seven, on both the AGR and AGS systems.

In addition, the Secretary's press office, USDA News Center, USDA's Assistant Public Affairs Director are on the system, 10 land-grant university information offices and one state department of agriculture information office.

The newest sign-up from outside governmental and institutional agencies is the Minneapolis STAR-TRIBUNE's new agricultural electronic service, serving a test area of farmers around Fargo, North Dakota. The mailbox is AGZ020.

New York Department of Agriculture & Markets and the Ohio Department of Agriculture have inquired about the electronic mail system, along with two more USDA agency information offices.

NEW USDA ORGANIZATIONAL CHART PUBLISHED

USDA's latest organizational chart, including photos of the department's top officials, is scheduled to be carried in the January 27th issue of "USDA," the department's employee newsletter.

The chart shows Claude W. Gifford as the director of information, reporting directly to the Secretary of Agriculture.

John Ochs is shown on the chart, also reporting directly to the Secretary, as the Secretary's press secretary.

FROM FAT CITY TO STAR-SPANGLED SPENDER

Columnist Don Lambro's epic on waste in federal government, "Fat City," created quite a stir when first published in 1980.

If you missed reading the book, all is not lost.

A movie version of the book will soon be appearing on public television stations around the country, courtesy of the Heritage Foundation.

"Star-Spangled Spender," a one-hour film version of Lambro's "encyclopedia of federal boondoggles" (as one newspaper account described it), will premier at a Kennedy Center gala February 1.

A nationwide PBS telecast is scheduled for February 18.

SOUTHERN AG COMMUNICATORS PLAN PROGRAM

A full 2 1/2-day program is planned for southern agricultural research communicators when they meet in conjunction with the 79th annual meeting of the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists in Orlando, Florida, Feb. 8-10.

JoAnn B. Pierce, with the editorial department of the University of Florida Institute of Food & Agricultural Sciences, and chairperson of the SAAS communication section, says the program will tap area resources, offer variety and break some new ground.

The sessions, to be held in the Orlando Room of the Howard Johnson's Florida Center Hotel (not the Sheraton Twin Towers as reported in January 4 issue of INSIDE INFORMATION), should be professionally stimulating.

Attendees will hear the director of Disney World's new EPCOT Center's "The Land," explain how they tell the story of agriculture and the land to the people of future world.

A panel will discuss on-site departmental reviews, how to prepare for them, conduct them successfully and benefit from recommendations.

Other topics include non-technical approaches to communication research, use of the survey as a research tool for communication practitioners, assessing public interest in science and research news, information needs and sources of small farm operators, and the agricultural research story for town and country audiences.

One session will include a tour of a major southeastern typographer to see the latest technology in action. Other sessions will cover getting the most for the color dollar and using color effectively.

Another session will deal with putting information together by computer.

Time will be allowed on the final day for exchanging ideas among the participants.

Pierce says if anyone can share some experience in communicating agricultural research or in researching communications, or by sharing a communication technique that works for you, please call her at (904) 392-1771.

Others assisting Pierce in planning the program are Paul Donovan, Oklahoma State University (section vice chairperson), and Mary L. Cilley, University of Florida (section secretary).

2ND ANNUAL FOOD SAFETY CONTEST UNDERWAY

Elementary school children from across the country are again being asked to put on their thinking caps and dream up the perfect picture to show how to pack a bag or box lunch to prevent food poisoning.

The exercise is part of the second annual food safety poster contest sponsored by USDA's Food Safety & Inspection Service. The contest begins in January and closes March 14. Contest kits have been sent to elementary school teachers throughout the nation, according to Kevin Shields of the FSIS information staff.

Shields said this year's theme is designed to teach children (and hopefully their parents) how to prevent food poisoning that can result from improperly prepared and packaged lunches.

More than 2 million cases of food poisoning occur every year.

Anyone wanting more details about the contest may contact Shields in Room 1167-S, Food Safety & Inspection Service, USDA, Washington, DC 20250, or by calling (202) 447-9351.

INSIDE INFORMATION is published for distribution to public affairs and information staff members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its agencies, State Departments of Agriculture and Land Grant Universities.